

**Information Update to the Report on “The Status of Torture in Yemen”
submitted to the 43rd session of the Committee against Torture (CAT)**

Submitted to the 44th session of the CAT

*Submitted by the Sisters’ Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF)
With the support of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)*

Immediately after the participation of the Sister Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF) in the 43rd session of the Committee Against Torture (CAT) on November 3-4, 2009, and the issuing by the CAT of concluding remarks and recommendations to Yemen, the SAF and the organization's chairperson, Mrs. Amal Al-Basha, was subjected to diverse and serious incidents of harassment by the Yemeni authorities.

The SAF had submitted a shadow report to the committee on October 12, 2009, in collaboration with other Yemeni human rights organizations. The report was jointly prepared in coordination with The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and Human Rights Watch (HRW). It provided a detailed description of the human rights violations practiced by Yemeni authorities. The report contained a wide range of cases reflecting the government's grave violation of the Convention Against Torture. Due in part to the information contained in the report, the Committee adopted firm recommendations, calling on Yemeni authorities to enact necessary legal and practical measures to prohibit torture, punish its perpetrators, and reform prisons.

Furthermore, a NGO delegation which including Mrs. Al-Basha, as well as three other Yemeni human rights defenders, traveled to Geneva to participate in the review of Yemen at the CAT. The delegation also met with the Special Rapporteurs on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom, the Situation on Human Rights Defenders, and Torture and Other Cruel Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Moreover, they also met with different country delegations and discussed the deteriorating human rights situation in Yemen.

As a result of these activities, the SAF has faced numerous incidents of harassment, as an effort by the government to threaten the human rights defenders and prevent their participation in upcoming international activities. The week following her return from Geneva, Mrs. Al-Basha and the SAF were victims of various incidents of disruptions.

On November 17, 2009 the brakes of Mrs. Amal Al-Basha's car were deliberately sabotaged. A few days later on November 20-21 2009, Mrs. Al-Basha received over 50

anonymous phone calls. During one such phone call, the caller informed her that he worked for the investigation department, and used an intimidating tone. Mrs. Al-Basha was attacked on her way out from the Criminal Court, after attending the trial of political activists in South Yemen. Additionally, unidentified individuals terrorized her by spraying a liquid on her face. This was done in a manner similar to that practiced by Islamic extremists, using burning chemical fluids that distort and cause blindness on the faces of women.

On November 22, 2009, the SAF office was broken into. The office windows were smashed and the archives and files searched. However, nothing was reported stolen. The SAF reported the incident to the police and an investigation was opened, but was not resumed, nor was an adequate outcome produced.

It is widely suspected that these patterns of attacks are affiliated with the Yemeni National Security Agency. These attacks are carried out in an effort to silence human rights defenders, and prevent them from directing their pleas and petitions internationally.